

# Staff Summary Report



To: Mayor and City Council  
Through: City Manager

Agenda Item Number 35  
Meeting Date: 10/18/01

**SUBJECT:** QWEST TEMPE MAIN SWITCH ADDITION SIP-2001.69

**PREPARED BY:** Hector Tapia, Senior Planner (480-350-8331)

**REVIEWED BY:** Dave Fackler, Development Services Manager (480-350-8333)

**BRIEF:** This is the first public hearing for Qwest Tempe Main Switch Addition for a use permit for a second floor addition and for a building height variance located at 33 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street.

**COMMENTS:** **PLANNED DEVELOPMENT (0406)** Hold the first public hearing for **QWEST TEMPE MAIN SWITCH ADDITION** (Qwest, Dick Johans, property owner) for a use permit and height variance for a second floor addition located at 33 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The following is requested from the City of Tempe:

**#SIP-2001.69** A site plan for a 39,272 s.f. switch equipment facility, including 11,237 s.f. for a second story addition, on 0.44 net acres. **(See list of the use permit and variance on Attachment 2.)**

Document Name: 20011018devsrh04

Supporting Documents: Yes

**SUMMARY:** The Qwest Tempe Main switching facility, located at the southeast corner of Maple Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street, has been in operation at this location since 1959. This facility, during the last few years, has experienced a high demand for its telecommunication services. This request includes a use permit and one variance. The use permit is to allow a 11,237 s.f. second floor addition. The variance will increase the maximum allowed building height from 35 feet to 48 feet. The second floor addition will house telephone switch equipment and supporting systems. The intention of the additional building height is to screen communication equipment and a large stand-by generator for back-up power. According to the applicant, the improvements will provide high speed Internet options, enhance other telephone services in the downtown area, and to meet the requirements of the Arizona Corporation Commission. The requested use permit and variance appear to be justified since the improvements should provide enhanced communication services to the downtown area and its surroundings. Staff supports this request and to date no public input has been received.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff - Approval  
Public - None

- ATTACHMENTS:**
1. List of Attachments
  2. History & Facts / Description
  3. Comments / Reason for Approval / Conditions of Approval
- 
- A. Location Map
  - B. Letter of Explanation for Use Permit & Variance
  - C. Letter of Authorization
  - D. Site Plan
  - E. Landscape Plan
  - F. Floor Plans
  - G. Roof Plan
  - H. Elevations
  - I. Building Sections

## **HISTORY & FACTS:**

<u>July 28, 1970.</u>	The Board of Adjustment approved a use permit for Mountain Bell to construct an addition to a telephone equipment building.
<u>August 4, 1970.</u>	The Design Review Board approved a proposed addition to the existing building.
<u>May 5, 1977.</u>	The Board of Adjustment approved a use permit to expand the telephone equipment building and a parking variance to permit parking on a non-contiguous lot, including a variance to reduce the minimum parking spaces required.
<u>April 8, 1993.</u>	The Design Review Board staff approved a request for building/roof mounted equipment screen walls.
<u>October 12, 2000.</u>	City Council approved a use permit for an 8,000 s.f. second story addition.
<u>September 19, 2001.</u>	The Design Review Board approved an 11,237 s.f. second story building addition.

## **DESCRIPTION:**

Owner - Qwest  
Applicant – Jack Paul  
Architect – Smith Group, Inc.  
Existing zoning - CCD  
Total site area – 0.446 net acres  
Total bldg. area – 39,272 s.f. (including 11,237 s.f. addition)  
Lot coverage – 87%  
Parking required – 30 spaces  
Total Parking provided – 34 spaces

### Use Permit:

Allow an 11,237 s.f. second story addition in the CCD Zoning District.

### Variances:

Increase the maximum allowed building height from 35 feet to 48 feet.

**COMMENTS:** The Qwest Tempe Main switching facility, located at the southeast corner of Maple Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street, has been in operation at this location since 1959. This facility, during the last few years, has experienced a high demand for its telecommunication services. This request includes a use permit and one variance.

The use permit is to allow an 11,237 s.f. second floor addition. The variance will increase the maximum allowed building height from 35 feet to 48 feet. The second floor addition will house telephone switch equipment and supporting systems. The intention of the additional building height is to screen communication equipment and a large stand-by generator for back-up power.

According to the applicant, the improvements will provide high speed Internet options, enhance other telephone services in the downtown area, and to meet the requirements of the Arizona Corporation Commission.

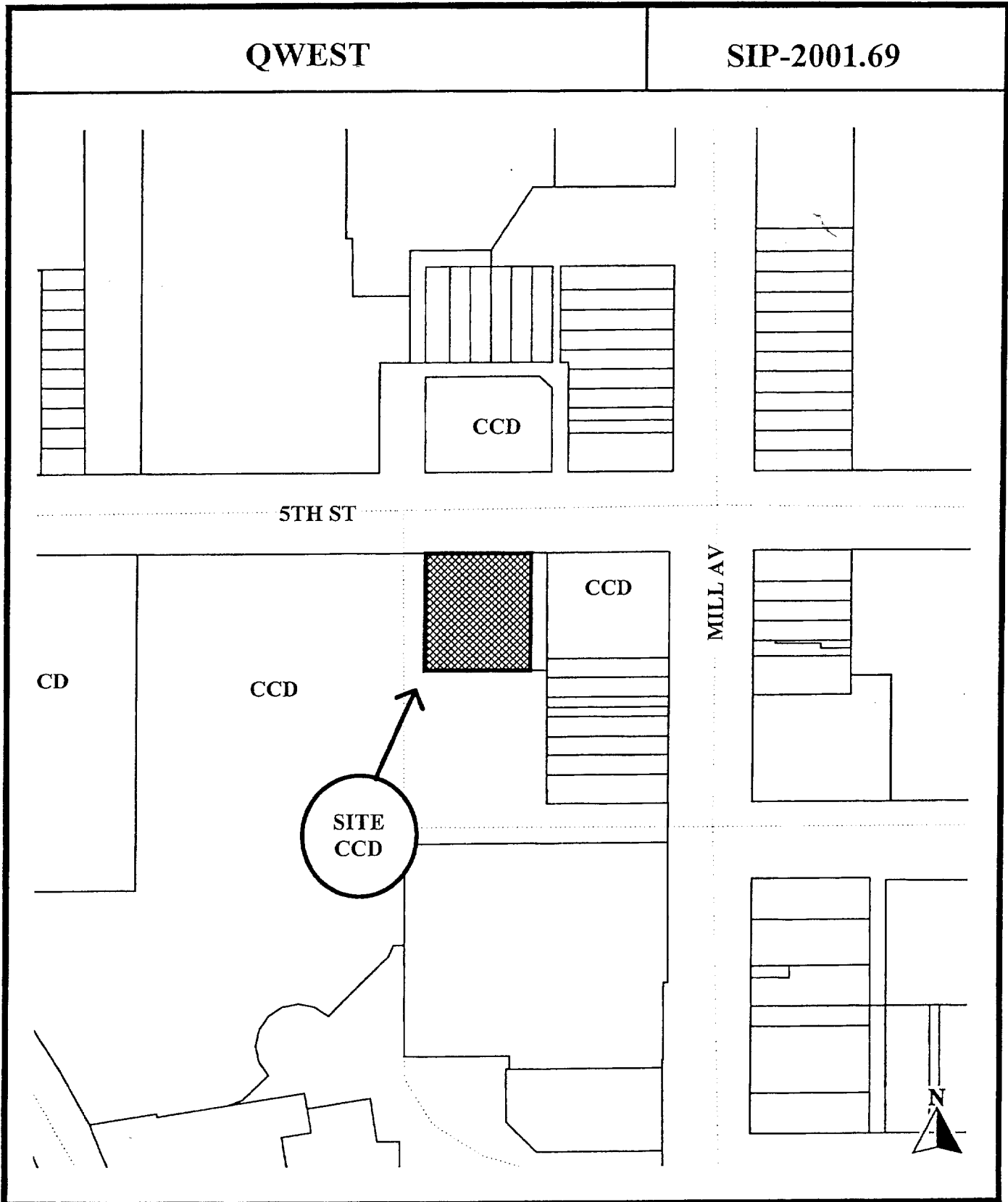
The requested use permit and variance appear to be justified since the improvements should provide enhanced communication services to the downtown area and the surrounding neighborhood. Staff supports this request and to date no public input has been received.

**REASON(S) FOR  
APPROVAL:**

1. The use permit and variance should not be detrimental to adjacent property owners or the immediate neighborhood in general.
2. The proposed improvements to the Qwest facility should benefit the downtown area and the neighborhood.

**CONDITION(S)  
OF APPROVAL:**

1. A valid building permit shall be obtained and substantial construction commenced by November 1, 2002 or the variance and use permit shall be deemed null and void.



Location Map

A

September 14, 2001

City of Tempe  
Development Services Department  
31 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tempe, Arizona 85282-5002

Re: Letter of Explanation/Intent  
Use Permit Application  
Qwest Tempe Main Switch Addition  
33 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
SmithGroup Project No. 19330.006

## SmithGroup

SmithGroup Incorporated  
2800 North Central Avenue  
Suite 1200  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004  
T: 602 265 2200  
F: 602 265 2244  
www.smithgroup.com

In accordance with the City of Tempe Development Services Department staff request during the Preliminary Site Plan Review process, SmithGroup is submitting this application on behalf of Qwest for a Use Permit in order to expand their existing Tempe Main switching facility located in the CCD Zoning District. The expansion of the facility, and therefore this request, is necessitated by the increased demand for telecommunications services due to the growth of Tempe.

The proposed expansion entails an 11,237 square foot second floor addition over the east portion of the existing building. The second floor addition, like the entire first floor and basement, houses telephone switch equipment and supporting systems. The building expansion does not encroach on the site setbacks. The expansion will not significantly increase traffic or parking requirements. An application for a height variance is being submitted concurrently with this Use Permit application and a Design Review is already underway at this time.

There will not be any damage or nuisance arising from the proposed expansion. The existing building has been in use as a telephone switch since 1959 and enlarging it will not generate additional noise, smoke, odors, dust, vibration or illumination.

The telephone switch and toll functions do not present threats to life safety or property. There are no significant hazards from explosion, contamination, fire, or flooding.

The entire building is essentially unoccupied by people and does not generate additional vehicle or pedestrian traffic. The Planning Division of the Development Services Dept. has indicated that the 34 parking spaces in the lot at the corner of Maple Avenue and 5<sup>th</sup> Street deeded to Qwest in an agreement with the City of Tempe, dated April 15, 1987 will be sufficient to cover the required 30 spaces determined in accordance with the Tempe parking ordinance.

The proposed addition is a partial second floor, essentially unoccupied by people, to be used for telephone switch equipment. There will be HVAC and stand-by generator equipment located on the roof in a screened equipment area.

The appearance of the existing building will be improved, and the existing and new portions unified, with the addition of brick pilasters and horizontal brick accent bands. New brick pilasters and accents will be constructed on the east and south elevations, currently clad in stucco only. The existing stucco will be patched and all

B

Letter of Explanation/Intent  
Use Permit Application  
Qwest Tempe Main Switch Addition  
September 14, 2001  
Page 2

SmithGroup

stucco surfaces, new and existing, will be painted a lighter color. The building will also conform more closely to the character of downtown Tempe and the Centerpointe area with removal of the raised planters along 5<sup>th</sup> Street and addition of brick paved walkways along both 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Maple Avenue. Brick pavers and street trees will be planted in accordance with City of Tempe standard details.

We are requesting approval of this Use Permit on behalf of Qwest who provide local telephone service to the downtown Tempe area. This area has seen significant residential and business growth during the last 20 years. Serving this growth, as well as increased demand for other telecommunications services such as Internet access, has used up the spare capacity designed into the last building addition in 1977. Qwest has been mandated by the Arizona Corporation Commission to improve and expand service and the expansion of the Tempe Main switch is a vital step in meeting this need.

Best regards,

SmithGroup Arizona



Jack Paul, AIA  
Associate

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B1

September 14, 2001

City of Tempe  
Development Services Department  
31 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tempe, Arizona 85282-5002

Re: Letter of Justification  
Height Variance Application  
Qwest Tempe Main Switch Addition  
33 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
SmithGroup Project No. 19330.006

**SmithGroup**

SmithGroup Incorporated  
2800 North Central Avenue  
Suite 1200  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004  
t: 602 265 2200  
f: 602 265 2244  
www.smithgroup.com

In accordance with the City of Tempe zoning requirements for the CCD Zoning District, SmithGroup is submitting this application on behalf of Qwest for a Height Variance in order to expand their existing Tempe Main switching facility. The expansion of the facility, and therefore this request, is necessitated by the increased demand for telecommunications services due to the growth of Tempe. This variance is seeking to increase the allowable height of the screen wall to 13'-0".

The proposed expansion entails an 11,237 square foot second floor addition over the east portion of the existing building. The second floor addition, like the entire first floor and basement, houses telephone switch equipment and supporting systems. The operation of the telephone switch equipment requires a substantial HVAC plant and a large stand-by generator to provide back-up power as required by the FCC. With the limited site area, the only location available for this equipment is on the roof. The size of the generator acoustical enclosure and supporting structure dictate that a high screen wall is required.

Substantial expansion of the existing switch facility, in its current location, is necessary to both expand and improve telephone service in Tempe. Qwest is unable to solve the space problem by building an entirely new facility elsewhere because were a new site found today, it would take five to seven years to have that facility operational. The existing building is fed by an underground telecommunications infrastructure that cannot be moved. Therefore, the expansion needs to take place on this site and since the building already extends to the property and setback lines, the only direction for expansion is up.

The CCD zoning restricts buildings to 35'-0" in height, with a maximum 5'-0" screen for a total of 40'-0". The variance is requested to allow a screen wall that is 13'-0" above the 35'-0" building height for a total of 48'-0". The building parapet height will be maintained at or below the 35'-0" limit. The screen height is determined by the HVAC and generator equipment, without which the facility could not function.

B2



The screen wall height variance being requested is necessary to shield adjacent properties from view of the HVAC and generator equipment, thus preserving the property rights and enjoyment of the surrounding property owners. The completed facility will not generate additional traffic, noise, or pollution.

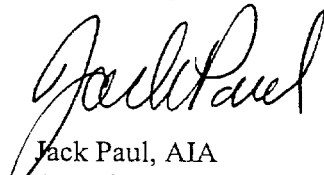
Qwest has a mandate from the Arizona Corporation Commission to improve and expand services. The City of Tempe has grown and is stretching the capacity of the existing building, thus creating a demand for more switch equipment space and consequently a greater demand for support equipment and back-up power.

SmithGroup

We are requesting approval of this height variance on behalf of Qwest to support their efforts to improve telephone service to their Tempe customers.

Best regards,

SmithGroup Arizona



Jack Paul, AIA  
Associate

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B3

Qwest Corporate Real Estate  
3640 East Indian School Road, Suite 200  
Phoenix, Arizona 85018

October 10, 2001

Mr. Hector Tapia, AICP  
City of Tempe  
Development Services Department, Planning Division  
31 East 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tempe, Arizona 85282-5002


Re: Letter of Authorization for Use Permit and Variance Application  
Qwest Tempe Main Switch Addition  
33 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street

Dear Hector;

Qwest Corporate Real Estate is submitting an application for a Use Permit and Height Variance in order to expand the Tempe Main Switch Facility located at 33 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street. The expansion of this facility is necessary to support the growing needs for telecommunication services in the city of Tempe.

SmithGroup, Inc. is providing the architectural and engineering design for the proposed expansion. We have authorized SmithGroup, Inc. to make the application on our behalf and represent Qwest in working with the city staff.

We appreciate your support and assistance in our efforts to complete this expansion. Please give me a call at 602-630-7565 if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely, 

Qwest Corporate Real Estate

Richard Johans  
Project Manager

Cc: SmithGroup, Inc.

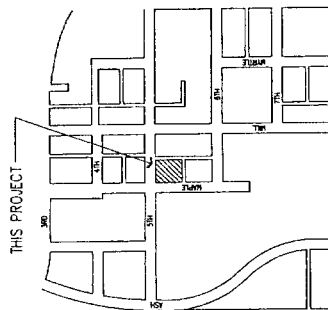
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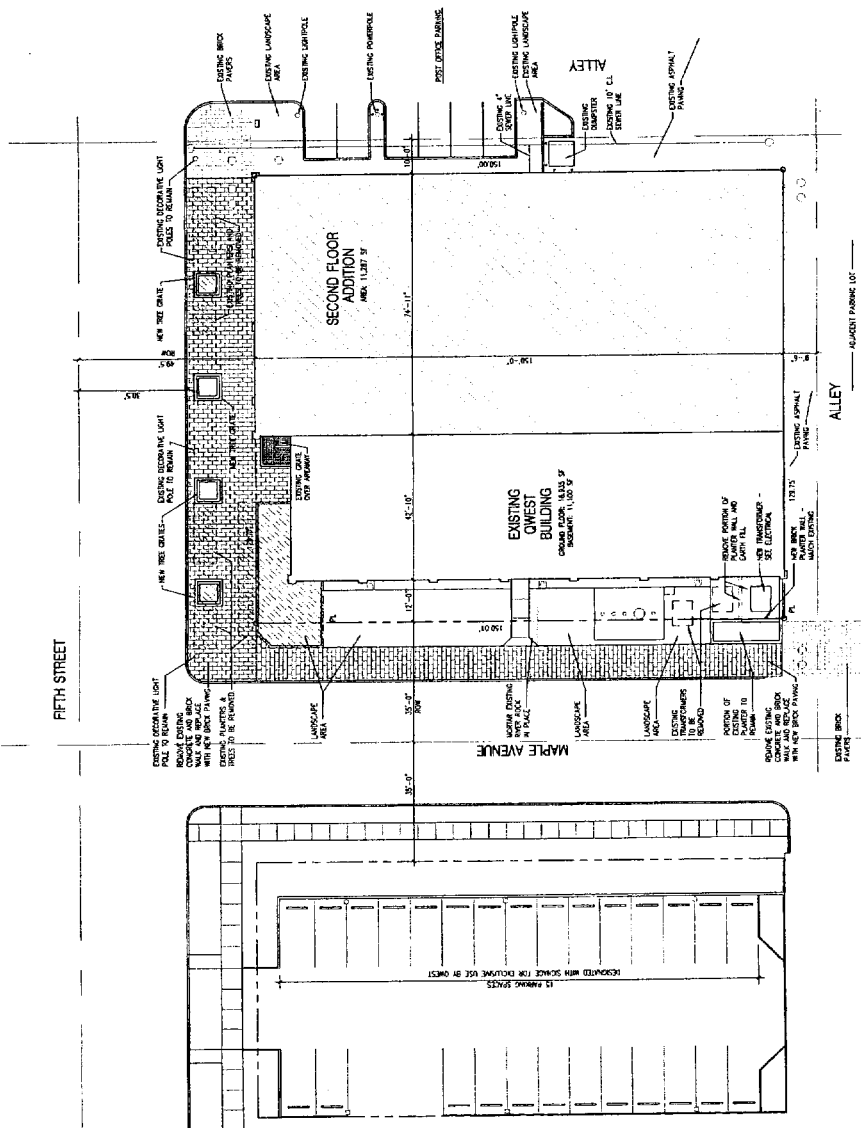
EXTING  
FIRE  
HYDRANT

**CASTING ZONE:**

**LEGAL DESCRIPTION**



UNIVERSITY  
VICINITY MAP  
NO SCALE



1 SITE PLAN

0-1-91/16

1967 1968

Qwest  
CORPORATE REAL ESTATE  
SECTION  
SITE PLAN

SmithGroup

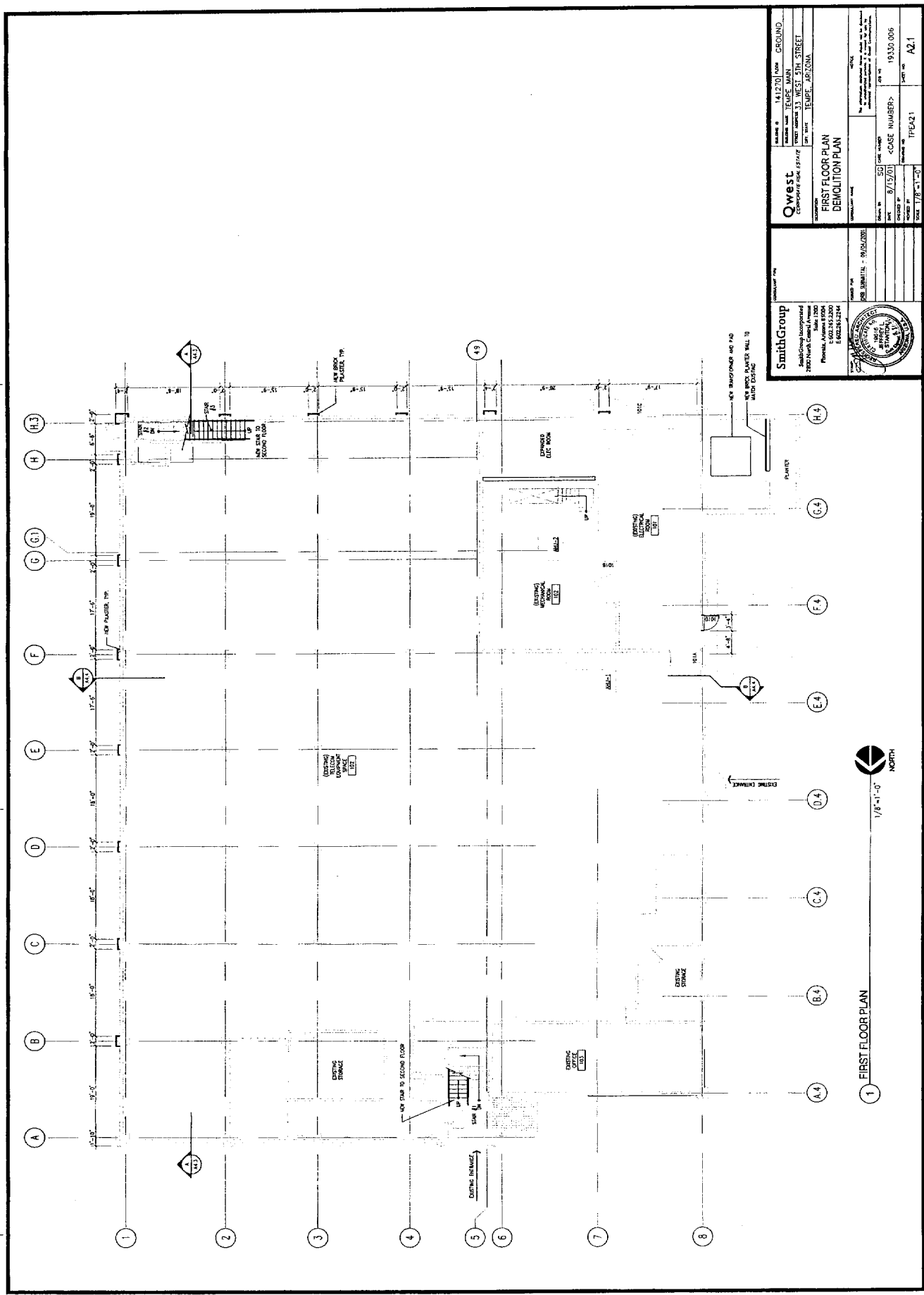
SmithGroup Incorporated  
800 North Central Avenue  
Suite 1200  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004  
☎ 602.265.2200  
☎ 602.265.2244

RECEIVED ARGUMENTS  
JAN 15 1961  
JEFFREY L.  
STANTON  
U.S. DISTRICT COURT  
ARIZONA

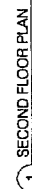
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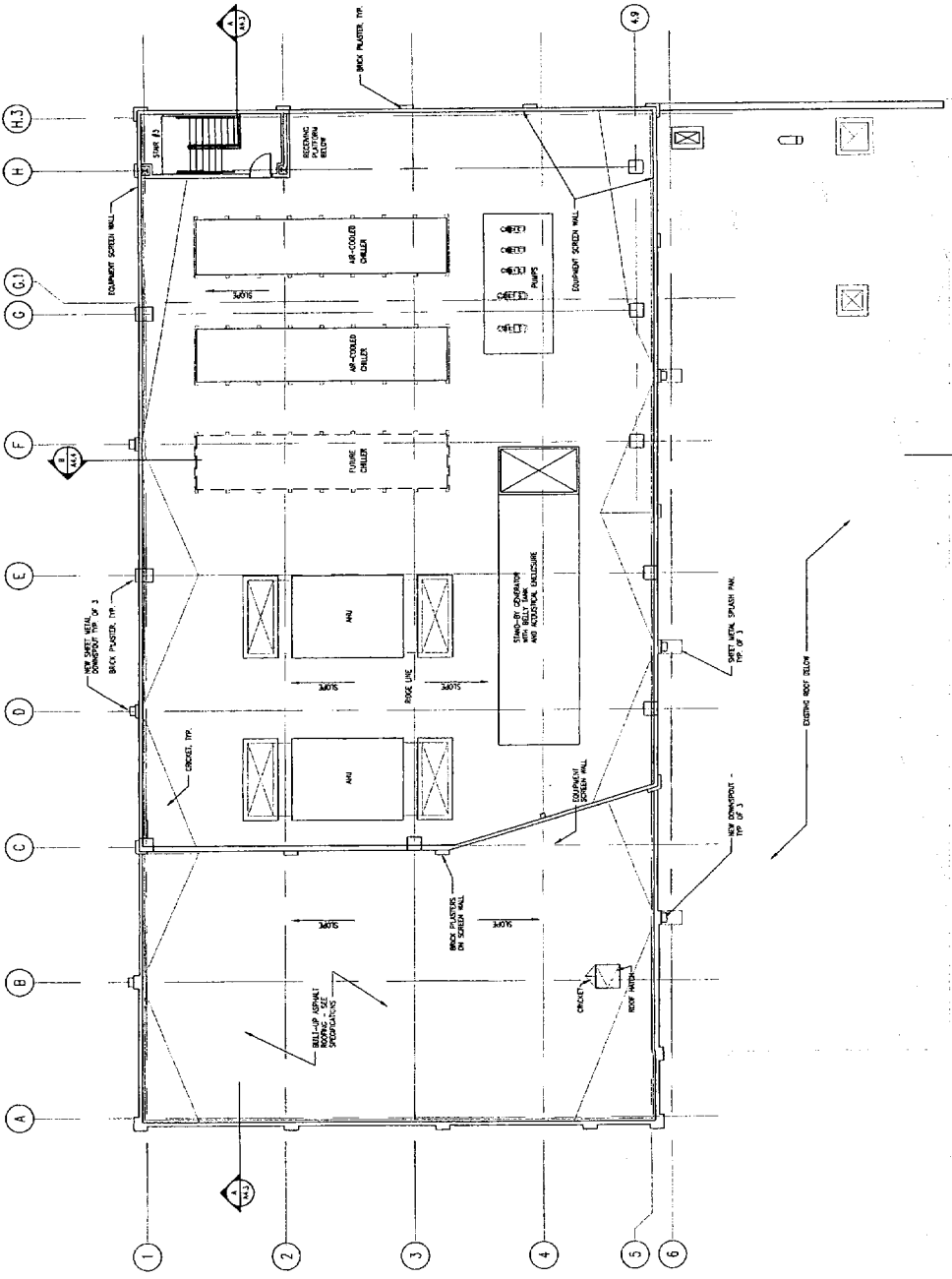
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<b>SmithGroup</b> SmithGroup Incorporated 2000 North Central Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85004 602.753.2200 602.626.2244		<b>Qwest</b> 141270 NAME GROUND TEMPERATURE MAIN 83412 TEMPERATURE MAIN 83412 TEMPERATURE MAIN 83412 TEMPERATURE MAIN 83412	
<b>DEMOLITION PLAN</b>		<b>DEMOLITION PLAN</b>	
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PROJECT NO: 19310.006		PROJECT NO: 19310.006	
SHEET NO: 17/8-1-0		SHEET NO: 17/8-1-0	
SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"		SCALE: 1/8"=1'-0"	
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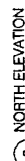
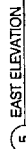


1 ROOF PLAN  
1/8"=1'-0"  
NORTH

<b>SmithGroup</b> SmithGroup Incorporated 2800 North Central Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85016 P: 602.555.2200 F: 602.555.2244	<b>Qwest</b> CORPORATE CASE FILE		PROJECT NO. 141201	DATE 11/12/01	PROJECT NAME ROOF
	PROJECT NAME ROOF PLAN		PROJECT NO. 141201	DATE 11/12/01	PROJECT NAME ROOF
DESIGNED BY [Signature]		DATE 8/15/01	CASE NUMBER	19330.006	
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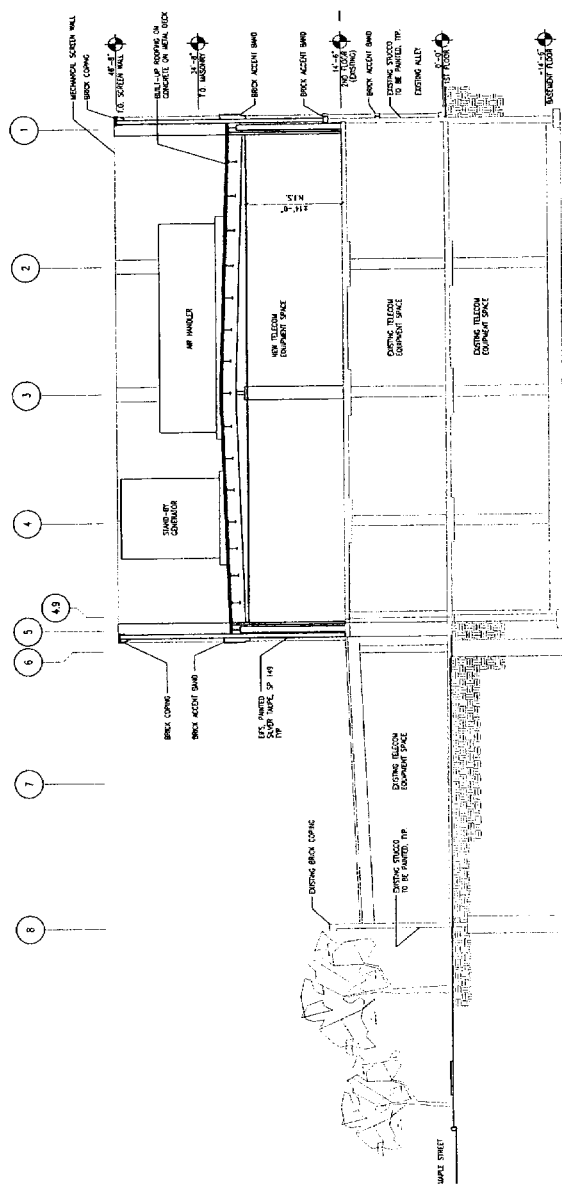
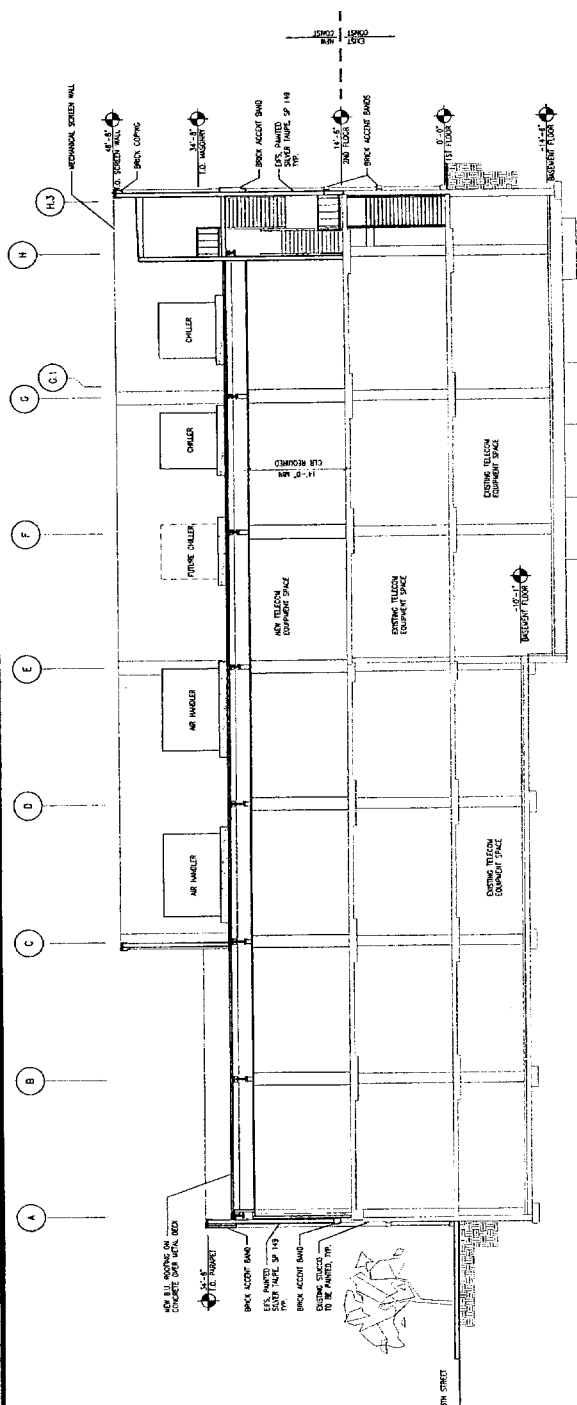


ELEVATION NOTES:

1. PAINT ALL STUDS, CEILING & NEW, DAWN-EDWARDS COLOR. SANDY MAPLE, SP 149
2. PATCH ALL DAMAGED STUDS & BRICK
3. ALL NEW BRICK SHALL BE PRINCETON BROOKLYN LUMBER COMPANY, COLOR #72. NO TRYING TO MATCH EXISTING.

[illegible]

H.

[illegible]